

# 1798 REBELLION

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## SOUTH DUBLIN



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SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE ATHA CLIATH THEAS

£1

This is a history not so much of events as  
of the people who shaped them. It is a  
tale of the resolve of the inhabitants of  
Tallaght, Rathfarnham, Rathcoole,  
Clondalkin and Lucan to be part of the  
combination of bravery and idealism which  
remain the legacy of the  
Rebellion of 1798

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# South Dublin County Council

Comhairle Chontae Atha Cliath Theas



**Ag Seo Ár gCúram**

This We Hold in Trust

# INTRODUCTION

Many factors conspired to bring about the rebellion of 1798. These included a fast growing population, agrarian unrest and outside influences such as the French and American Revolutions. Many anti-Catholic laws had been removed by legislation but political power rested firmly in the hands of the Protestants who still controlled the army, finance and education. The legacy of the penal laws remained and there was considerable unrest at a local level in Ireland. However, it was not until the last decade of the century that a movement to effectively channel popular feeling into a united cause emerged.

The Society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast in October 1791. The outbreak of the French revolution in 1789 and the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity had had a profound influence on the young radicals who founded the society, foremost of whom were Wolfe Tone, Hamilton Rowan, Samuel Neilson and Thomas Russell. Their objective was that all people would be equally represented in parliament and that the political system would include people of all religious persuasions. Initially the United Irish movement was slow to spread outside Ulster. However, it did organise in Dublin where Napper Tandy became one of the leading figures.

In 1793 Britain declared war on France and in 1794 the government suppressed the United Irishmen. They reconstituted in 1794 as a secret oath-bound society and began to develop a military structure and to prepare for war. Wolfe Tone succeeded in enlisting the aid of the French. In December 1796, a fleet of 48 ships and 13,000 men set sail from France under General Hoche, accompanied by Tone. Unfortunately the expedition was dispersed by a storm in Bantry Bay and the survivors returned to France.



Despite this setback, the United Irishmen continued to plan for rebellion. The government reacted strongly and by 1797 many liberal officials had been replaced. Lord Camden became Viceroy and a 'scorched earth' policy ensued. Raids for arms became more frequent and a state of panic existed amongst the aristocracy and gentry. The United Irishmen continued to organise with Dublin now becoming the headquarters. The organisation had members from some of the most influential sections of Irish society and listed among its leaders Thomas Addis Emmet, son of the official state physician, Arthur O'Connor, a radical aristocrat, Oliver Bond, a wealthy wool merchant and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the most militarily experienced of the group.

By the winter of 1797/98 hopes of a renewed French invasion faded and the United Irishmen adopted a go-it-alone approach. The country began the slide towards rebellion and a military strategy evolved which focussed on Dublin. The planned insurrection involved three parts - the seizure of strategic posts within the capital, the establishment of a circle of positions in the hinterland, and the engagement of government forces in outlying counties in order to prevent them reinforcing the city.

The government was however well aware of the intentions of this group of United Irishmen. A network of spies kept them constantly supplied with information. In March 1798 the Leinster leadership was arrested at the home of Oliver Bond. The government was acting on information received from one informer, Thomas Reynolds, a relative of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Ironically Fitzgerald evaded the authorities on this occasion. Following the arrest of the Leinster leaders the government declared martial law and the army to all intents and purposes took control. Floggings and hangings became commonplace.

Edward Cooke, the Under Secretary of State, continued receiving information from the informers.

One such informer wrote to Cooke on 17 May 1798 saying "rising to be on Wednesday or Thursday night<sup>1</sup> and suggesting that nearly 10,000 men would rise in County Dublin. Secret information was also received on 18th May alleging that "Thursday is the day"<sup>2</sup>. The information supplied was almost accurate, and despite the arrest some days previously of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the rising began on 23 May 1798. The arrests had however crippled the movement, and the seizure of Dublin failed mainly due to lack of leadership. The rebel positions on the outskirts of the city had some small success, but it was not until Wexford that real success was met.

Throughout May and early June 1798, the Wexford rebels fought government forces and reinforcements until eventually suffering defeat at New Ross and Vinegar Hill (21 June). The rebels carried on their struggle for another month but were eventually forced to surrender. Their Northern colleagues suffered a similar fate. On 6 June the United Irishmen of Antrim rose. Led by Henry Joy McCracken, they enjoyed initial success at Randalstown and Ballymena but were defeated following an assault on Antrim town. In Down the rebels, led in this case by Henry Monroe, took Ballynahinch and Newtownards but were forced to surrender when the government forces attacked their stronghold in Ballynahinch on 13th June. In August 1798, the long awaited French forces arrived. Over 1000 French Troops, led by General Humbert landed at Killala in County Mayo. They had initial success in Castlebar but succumbed at Ballinamuck, Co. Longford on 8th October.

On the 12 October a French force was intercepted off Tory Island by the British navy. The force was defeated and among those taken prisoner was Wolfe Tone. Tone was taken to Dublin and charged with treason. Following a court-martial he was sentenced to death by hanging. When his request to be executed by firing squad was refused, he slashed his throat with a razor blade and died a week later. The rebellion of 1798 was over.

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<sup>1</sup> Sproule to Cooke, 17 May 1798 (N.A. (*National Archives*)  
Reb. Pap. 620/37/97; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p.627).

<sup>2</sup> Secret Information received by Alderman James, 18 May 1798 (N.A. Reb. Pap. 620/37/100; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4p. 627).

# SOUTH DUBLIN IN 1798

## INTRODUCTION

" Dublin in 1798 was, perhaps, one of the most agreeable places of residence in Europe . . . amongst the lower classes the extreme destitution of the latter years was generally speaking unknown . . .". So said Lord Cloncurry, a wealthy landowner, patron of the arts and member of the United Irishmen<sup>1</sup>. Rapid growth in population towards the end of the eighteenth century led to increased urbanisation and by the end of the century Dublin had a population of almost 200,000 and was the most important city on the island. It was the seat of government and the centre of commercial and social life.

## SOUTH DUBLIN

In 1801 Joseph Archer undertook a survey of County Dublin on behalf of the Dublin Society and from it a clear picture of the county emerges. Archer remarks on Clondalkin's ancient round tower, Lucan is described as a 'handsome town', Knocklyon 'a small pleasant village' while Rathfarnham is a 'large handsome village'. Newcastle, although a 'poor village' was formerly a borough town and returned two members to the Irish Parliament. Tallaght he describes as 'a large village or town . . . situate in fine country'<sup>2</sup> Archer also speaks highly of the many estates in the area including Marlay, owned by the Right Hon. David LaTouche, Rathfarnham Castle - the seat of the Marquis of Ely, Lucan - the seat of George Vesey Esq. - and Palmerstown, the seat of the Right Hon. Lord Donoghmore.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Carty (ed.), Ireland from Grattan's parliament to the great famine: a documentary record. (Dublin, 1949), p.85.

<sup>2</sup> Statistical survey of the county Dublin, with observations on the means of improvement. Joseph Archer (Dublin, 1801), pp 88 - 96.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.101 - 107.



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<sup>2</sup> Almanac for the year 1798, (N.A., no title given first pages missing)

<sup>4</sup> A history and topography of Dublin city and county, Samuel Lewis (Cork, 1920, originally published in *A History and Topography of Ireland*, 1837), p. 213.



## AGRICULTURE

Farms in the vicinity of the city of Dublin were generally small, under 30 acres. However in the more remote parts of the county, sizes ranged from 50 to 150 acres. One eighth of the County of Dublin was bogland, mountain and wasteland, the majority of this land being located in the south of the county. The mountains were bleak and in the main uncultivated, although suitable for sheep and cattle. Very little tillage was carried out in County Dublin<sup>1</sup>. During the latter part of the eighteenth century many landlords did however seek to improve the quality of their holdings and raise the general standard of agriculture. David LaTouche of Marlay was one of the foremost of the potato cultivators. At Marlay he constructed a large boiler which could steam seven hundred weight of mash<sup>2</sup> and he also had a large threshing mill on his demesne<sup>3</sup>.

## POPULATION

The first successful census in Ireland did not take place until 1821. Prior to this, figures may only be estimated from a combination of sources, including Hearth, Cess, other tax data and surviving parish records. In 1790 the estimated population of Ireland stood at 4 million but by 1800 this had risen to 5 million<sup>4</sup>. Archer reckoned that there were approximately 170,000 inhabitants in County Dublin<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical survey of the County Dublin, with observations on the means of improvement. Joseph Archer (Dublin, 1801), pp 47,63.

<sup>2</sup> R.B. McDowell, Ireland in the age of imperialism and revolution, 1760 - 1801. (United States, 1979),. p.8.

<sup>3</sup> Statistical survey of the County Dublin, with observations on the means of improvement. Joseph Archer (Dublin, 1801), p.80.

<sup>4</sup> Cormac O Grada, Ireland A new economic history 1780 - 1939. (New York, 1994), pp 5,6.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical survey of the County Dublin, with observations on the means of improvement. Joseph Archer (Dublin, 1801), p. 208.

## STANDARD OF LIVING

Despite the economic progress of this period, accounts show that poverty was prevalent in the less well-off sectors of society. Archer describes their cottages as 'wretched'.<sup>1</sup> Another social commentator, Arthur Young, states that basic comforts such as proper bedding, kitchen utensils and household furniture were rarely to be found in the cabins of the lower classes<sup>2</sup>. The rent paid on such a cabin near Dublin ranged from 30 to 40s per year. In more remote parts of the county the farmers sometimes accommodated their labourers with free cabins, and in other places only a small rent was payable. By 1801, a labourer in Dublin earned between 8 and 9s per week and generally worked from 6am to 6pm with half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. At harvest time the working day was from sun-up to sun-set and in Winter for as long as one could see. The diet of these cottiers consisted mainly of potatoes and milk, with bread being a common substitute at times of hardship. Occasionally they had stirabout, a combination of oatmeal and water. Young believed this diet gave rise to a people athletic and robust in form. The clothing of this class was generally made from a material called frieze, a strong, warm and cheap fabric bought at the local fairs. The children rarely wore shoes or stockings and the women were more often without shoes than the men. However Young noted that the people were generally not badly dressed on Sundays and holidays. Fuel was a scarce commodity although south Dublin inhabitants fared better than most as turf was available locally.

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* p.110.

<sup>2</sup> A Tour in Ireland, Vol. 2., Arthur Young (London, 1892).

# REBELLION IN SOUTH DUBLIN

## RATHFARNHAM

The rebels in the Rathfarnham area were active from the outbreak of the rebellion despite the garrison of yeomen billeted in Rathfarnham Castle. These yeomen were under the control of Lord Ely and amongst their captains was David La Touche who resided nearby at Marlay. Many of the rebel leaders were, in fact, deserters from this Corps of yeomen. These included Byrne, Ledwich, and Wade, all Catholics who deserted and joined the rebels in May 1798<sup>1</sup>. Ledwich was a nephew of the parish priest of Rathfarnham.

The stopping of the mail coaches was the signal for the outbreak of Rebellion and on the evening of 23 May 1798 farmers and labourers in the area gathered in the foothills of the Dublin mountains awaiting this event.

Attacks began early on the evening of 23 May 1798. The Grange near Rathfarnham, the house of Mr. Minchin, occupied at the time by Major Sirr the elder and a female servant by the name of Middleton, was attacked by a party of rebels. The staff at The Grange were all members of the rebel party which was headed by Curran, the gardener, and McDonagh, the gatekeeper. The rebel party included several women.<sup>2</sup>

Reports state that nearby, on the same evening, a party of approximately 60 rebels led by a Martin Byrne were enroute to Rathfarnham from Tallaght. At Tibbradden they met Mr. Richard Davis and demanded his gun. Davis fearing for his life, gave over his gun and the party proceeded.

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland,. Richard Musgrave (reprint with introduction by David Dickson, ed. Steven Myers and Delores McKnight, U.S., 1995, of 3rd ed. 1802), p. 191; F.J. 26 May 1798.

<sup>2</sup> ibid p.203

Within a few yards of Davis they met Mr. Philip Prosser, an eminent silk throwster and likewise demanded his gun. Prosser refused to hand over his weapon and was murdered. The rebels continued towards Rathfarnham.<sup>1</sup>

Rathfarnham appears to have been the chosen rendezvous of the rebels and by the early hours of that morning a group of approximately five hundred had assembled at a place in the village known as The Ponds. Armed with pikes, muskets and pistols, they intended to march towards Dublin City. Their leader was a man named Edward Keogh who lived in the vicinity and "who had good prospects from the industry of his parents."<sup>2</sup>

En route to the city, via Crumlin and Clondalkin, the rebels came up against the Fifth Dragoons and a battle ensued at the Fox & Geese. The rebels were no match for the military skill of the Dragoons and many of them were killed and wounded. Edward Keogh, although badly injured, was taken prisoner and eventually informed on the rebels. Two others, Byrne and Keely, were killed. Graphic injuries were given in the Freeman's Journal of the following day:

" One got a back stroke of a sword across his two eyes and nose, that almost divided the head. The other was killed by another stroke of the sword on the side of the skull that clove it, and he received also a ball in the side of the head, and another in the groin." <sup>3</sup>

Ledwich and Wade were both court martialed and hanged on Queens Street Bridge<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Medlicott to Cooke, 16 Aug. 1798 (N.A., Reb. Pap. 620 39/176; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire. Vol. 4 p. 709) see also Reb. Pap. 620/3/16/3 and Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman's Journal 26 May, 1798

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> Dublin Journal 29 May 1798; F.J. (*Freemans Journal*) 26 May, 1798 and 29 May, 1798.



The rebels had dispersed all over the county by early June, although wandering groups continued to plague the authorities. Many of them seem to have taken refuge in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. Two rebels were arrested at Mount Venus by the Crumlin Cavalry in mid-June<sup>1</sup>. The Dublin Journal of 14 June reports that the rebels succeeded in destroying some property in the area around south Dublin, most notably houses near Ballinascorney belonging to Mr. Stuckey Simon<sup>2</sup>. Minor skirmishes continued throughout the month of June 1798, including an attack on the premises of one Mr. McDonald at Old Bawn, the burning of a Mr. Smith's house near Rathfarnham and an attack on the country residence of Alderman Foote near Mount Venus.<sup>3</sup>

The Dublin Mountains remained the preferred hiding place of the insurgents and on July 9 another incident occurred near Rathfarnham. A small detachment of Captain Beresfords' Dublin Cavalry, having heard rumours that the rebels were still active, marched to the neighbourhood of Rathfarnham. They came across a group of rebels carrying a green flag and wearing uniforms<sup>4</sup>, apparently carrying arms and ammunition to their colleagues congregated in the hills. A battle ensued after which three or four rebels were hanged at Rathfarnham<sup>5</sup>. The hanging place, according to local tradition, was at a house known as Chilham. In the retaining wall to the garden at Chilham there was a part of a tower containing an aperture from where the unfortunate rebels were supposedly hanged.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman's Journal 14 June 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Dublin Journal 14 June 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman's Journal 23 June 1798; 28 June 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 10 July 1798.

<sup>5</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland. Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995), p. 499.

<sup>6</sup> Local History Group, Rathfarnham I.C.A., Rathfarnham gateway to the hills. (Dublin, 1991), p. 15.

## TALLAGHT

It would appear from informers accounts that there was organised rebel activity in the Tallaght area prior to the rebellion. As early as September 1797 two Hackney cars carrying local insurgents arrived at the gates of the archbishop's palace in Tallaght Village. They were refused admission as the archbishop was not 'in the kingdom'. They explained that they had come only to collect the five guns reported to be stored in the building and any other ammunition that might be hidden there. By now a large group of people had arrived on foot and a melee was developing. Because of the crowd and the lateness of the hour the porter was persuaded to admit them. The five guns and blunderbusses were surrendered to the rebels, who then left. It is not known to what use these guns were put, or if the unsettled state of the country was used as a pretext for acquiring arms<sup>1</sup>.

Edward Cooke, the Under Secretary of State received considerable correspondence from his network of informers. In April 1798, Joseph Nugent, an informer, told him of a man named G. Johnson of Templeogue who was busy 'stirring up the people of Rathfarnham, Templeogue, Tallaght and Crumlin'<sup>2</sup>. Knowledge of a meeting at Saggart and the names of Captains in the rebel army such as Phillip Gerraty, Lyons of Newcastle and Masterson the milliner of Saggart was received from another informer.<sup>4</sup>

Detailed information in a letter from Richard Annesley to Cooke in May 1798 concerned a publican from Tallaght named Mourne. He was a sergeant in the rebel army. His house was a centre for Sunday meetings and he had concealed both pikes and papers in and around his house.

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<sup>1</sup> Hibernian Magazine, (Dublin, 1797), Part ii, p.245.

<sup>2</sup> Austin Cooper, An eighteenth century antiquary. Sketches, notes & diaries of Austin Cooper. (Dublin, 1942), pp 39/40.

<sup>3</sup> Nugent to Cooke, 2 Apr. 1798 (N.A. Reb. Pap. 620/36/11 Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p. 598.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (N.A., Reb. Pap. 620/51/146; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4).

Also mentioned was James Brown, a sergeant who kept pikes and bullets in his corn mills, and a cache of balls in the kiln. Mr. Hyland, the blacksmith in Bohernabreena made the pikes while the uniforms were made by Ned the tailor. J. Burne, M. Walshe, B. Roark and Heaton were also named as sergeants.<sup>1</sup>

Annesley further advises Cooke to search the area around the 'bleach green' where pikes and uniforms were hidden. This is a possible reference to the Old Bawn area of Tallaght where Haarlem & Co. had operated a Calico printing mill with a famous bleach green in 1776<sup>2</sup>. According to local lore this area was the scene of some action during the rebellion. In the grounds of Old Bawn House was a large Cypress tree known as the "Informers Tree". Tradition has it that a rebel due to be hanged from the tree turned informer and was pardoned<sup>3</sup>.

The villages of Newcastle, Saggart and the priests house at Rathcoole were also mentioned in informers accounts as locations for the hiding of weapons, and meeting places for rebel groups<sup>4</sup>. The people of the area were in a state of readiness by May 1798 and awaited the signal to enter the city and assist their fellow rebels. On the night of May 23 1798, large parties 'began to assemble near Tallaght and Rathcoole, along the strategic road south'<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Annesley to Cooke, 23 May 1798 (N.A., Reb. Pap. 620/37/130; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p. 630).

<sup>2</sup> James Hegarty, 'The Dodder Valley' in Dublin Historical Record ii, (1939 - 40), p.62.

<sup>3</sup> Blackrock Teachers Centre, Tallaght a resource pack for teachers. (Dublin, c1984), p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Ormsby to Cooke, 7 May 1798 (N.A. Reb. Pap. 620/37/33; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p. 618

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Pakenham, Year of liberty, the history of the great Irish rebellion of 1798, (London, 1969), p. 108.

## RATHCOOLE

In March of 1798 Mr. Buckley, a respectable gentleman farmer, was murdered near Rathcoole. A bayonet belonging to one of Captain Ormsby's Corps was discovered in Mr. Buckley's body. On inspection, Ormsby found that none of his corps was without a bayonet. Prior to his execution, Lt. John Clinch confessed that four of the corps had been involved in the murder and that he had taken a bayonet from the store to replace the one left in Mr. Buckley's body<sup>1</sup>.

The Rathcoole infantry, commanded by Captain Ormsby, was predominantly Catholic and many deserted to the rebel cause. Some of the yeomanry intended to murder Captain Ormsby, his brother and one or two other Protestants and then join their fellow rebels on the first attack. They had maintained regular contact with the rebels who exercised on neighbouring hills. The Government, aware of intense rebel activity in the area, sent reinforcements in the form of 80 Angus Fencibles and 20 of the Armagh Regiment.



*Rathcoole Police Station - the site of the hanging of the Rathcoole Baker and his assistant*

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S.,1995), pp 262 - 263.



The intended insurrection on the 23 May at Rathcoole was then foiled by a chance discovery. Being short of provisions, Captain Ormsby and a party went to forage on the Rathcoole hills. On finding a shepherd boy they questioned him about rebel assemblies on the hills. After torture the boy informed on the rebels. John Shee, Sergeant Walsh, Corporal Dillon, Corporal Byrne and William Harvey were believed to be rebel leaders. From their confessions other names became known to the military, most notable being John Clinch and Felix Rourke<sup>1</sup>.

Felix Rourke was born in 1765, the son of a turnpike keeper at Blackchurch. He was a permanent sergeant in Ormsby's yeomanry unit but deserted to the rebels before the break-out of the Rebellion. He was a colonel with the Kildare United Irishmen. He fought with them at the battles of Hacketstown, Clonard and Johnstown<sup>2</sup>. On the 7 August, Felix, his brother Captain Charles Rourke and Captains Charles B. Mahon and Nicholas Lyons surrendered in good faith<sup>3</sup>. Felix Rourke was jailed from 1798 to 1800 in Naas. He subsequently became involved with Robert Emmet's rebellion of 1803 and was arrested and tried in September of that year. He was hanged from the rafters of the burnt-out house that belonged to local priest, Father Harrold. He is buried in Bully's Acre<sup>4</sup>.

Lieutenant John Clinch was the well educated son of a wealthy man. He was a yeoman but had joined the United Irishmen as far back as 1792. He was tried and executed in Dublin on 2 June 1798 for being an officer in the rebel army and a traitor<sup>5</sup>. He allegedly cursed Father Harrold, the Parish Priest of Rathcoole, for encouraging the Rathcoole residents to join the rebels.

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<sup>1</sup> ibid pp 206 - 207

<sup>2</sup> Peter O'Sullivan (ed.), Newcastle Lyons. Parish of the pale, (Dublin, 1986), p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to \_\_\_\_ (N.A., Reb. Pap. 620/40/145; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Peter O'Sullivan (ed.), Newcastle Lyons. Parish of the pale, (Dublin, 1986), p. 73

<sup>5</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995), p. 207.

Father Harrold was born in Dublin in 1744 and at the age of 50 was appointed parish priest of Rathcoole. In the months preceding the Rebellion he frequently exhorted his flock to loyalty from the altar, though his contacts with the United Irishmen were arousing suspicion. It is believed that his house was used as a meeting place for rebel leaders and that, amongst others, Felix Rourke sheltered there. When the conspiracy at Rathcoole was discovered, many of the Rathcoole inhabitants, including Father Harrold, fled. He left for Cork. This immediately pointed to him as a suspect.

His house was searched and pikes were found in the thatch. Harrold returned under a protection note from the army that was then countermanded. He was arrested on Hazelhatch bridge on June 19 1798. He was offered the choice of being transported or to stand trial. He opted for the former and was sent to Botany Bay where he again became involved with the United Irishmen but their plans were discovered and defeated. He spent the rest of his life between Ireland and the U.S.A. and died in 1831 at the age of 87. He is buried at Golden Bridge Cemetery where his tomb can still be seen.<sup>1</sup>

On June 22 Captain Hewan of the Angussshire regiment with 20 of his men was ordered to march from Tallaght to provide reinforcements at Hazelhatch. They stopped at Rathcoole for refreshments. Some of the men became ill after eating some bread and milk. They suffered sick stomachs, headaches and violent vomiting. Mr. Robinson, a Protestant clergyman, his wife and seven children who were passing through Rathcoole were affected in the same manner by the bread.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter O'Sullivan (Ed.), Newcastle Lyons. Parish of the pale. (Dublin, 1986), pp 69-70.

The commanding officer ordered the arrest of the baker and his assistant, and another man named Doyle. Doyle kept 'a low public house' and some of the soldiers had been entertained there. The baker and his assistant were immediately shot. The following day brought news that the surrounding countryside had been crowded with armed men who had intended to surprise the garrison when debilitated by the poisoned bread. On hearing that the baker and his assistant had been shot, the rebels dispersed. The baker's house was searched and a quantity of yellow arsenic was found which proved to be the same poison as detected in the bread<sup>1</sup>.

Several attacks on individuals in Rathcoole occurred during the Rebellion. Towards the end of June, the house of Thomas Brunion near the village was attacked by rebels<sup>2</sup>. At the close of the Rebellion, a youth of 18 years named Phillips, a private in the Rathcoole cavalry, was decoyed into the neighbouring hills and savagely murdered. His father's house was plundered afterwards<sup>3</sup>.



*Grave of Fr. Harrold at Goldenbridge Cemetery*

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, (U.S., 1995), pp 262-263.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman's Journal 23 June 1798.

<sup>3</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, (U.S., 1995), p. 209.

## CLONDALKIN

The Clondalkin rebels like their comrades from Rathfarnham were in action from the outbreak of rebellion on 23 May 1798. On that night Lieutenant-Colonel Finlay was patrolling with a party of soldiers near Clondalkin. Finlay lived in Corkagh House and was a member of parliament for the area. On the night in question, he came across a body of rebels and a slight skirmish followed during which three rebels were killed. Their bodies were suspended from the gates of Dublin Castle the next morning as a warning to others<sup>1</sup>.

One of this group of rebels, Thomas Langan, having been injured, was left lying in a ditch at Clover Hill on lands belonging to James Bond. In a subsequent correspondence, Bond informed Edward Cooke about these rebels. He noted that they were assisted by a woman named Fennel who had herself been wounded. Others involved on that night included James Plunkett, who lived at Neilstown Bridge, and men named Kielty, Ryan and Fennel who all lived in cabins belonging to Bond. The gardener, James Morgan, was reported by Bond to have been missing from his regular duties but 'has appeared to be deranged in his senses for some time past which induces me not to suspect his having been out that night.'<sup>2</sup>

While this skirmish was taking place, the band of rebels led by Ledwich and Wade who had assembled originally in Rathfarnham were now en route to the city via Crumlin and Clondalkin. When they arrived at Clondalkin, they discovered that their colleagues had already dispersed - presumably having come to grief at the hands of Colonel Finlay. The Rathfarnham rebels split up agreeing to

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995), p.201.

<sup>2</sup> Bond to Cooke, 26 May 1798 (N.A., Pap. 620/37/172; Cal. Reb. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p. 636)



return home until a more suitable opportunity arose<sup>1</sup>. In the meantime, Lord Camden had sent a troop of the Fifth Dragoons, led by Lieutenant O'Reilly towards Rathfarnham as a result of intelligence he had received. O'Reilly was joined by the Earl of Roden and Lieutenant-Colonel Puleston of the Ancient Britons. They arrived in Rathfarnham, where they were told that the rebels had departed, and they then made their way home.

At a place known as the Fox and Geese, the rebels and the Fifth Dragoons met up and a battle followed. Lord Roden was slightly injured when the rebels sent a ball through his steel helmet. The Dragoons returned fire and several rebels were killed. The bodies of James Byrne and James Keely were brought into the Castle Yard and exhibited to public view<sup>2</sup>. Thomas Keogh, another of the rebel leaders presumed dead, was also brought in. Keogh, however, was not dead and on arrival at the Castle he began to stagger around the Yard, covered in blood, slashes and wounds. Having been administered medical assistance, the 'corpse' claimed that he had been inadvertently drawn into the events in Clondalkin and consequently informed on the rebels<sup>3</sup>. Ledwich and Wade, the two deserters from Lord Ely's Corp at Rathfarnham, were tried by court martial and found guilty. They were hanged at Queen's Street Bridge on Saturday 26 May 1798<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Pakenham, Year of liberty. the history of the great Irish rebellion of 1798 (London, 1969), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995), p.201

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Pakenham, Year of liberty. the history of the great Irish rebellion of 1798, (London, 1969), p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Dublin Journal 29 May 1798, F.J. 26 May 1798 and 29 May 1798.

An interesting local connection with the Rebellion is Newlands House, the family home of Lord Kilwarden. Born Arthur Wolfe, Lord Kilwarden was the Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1798, and was directly involved in the events surrounding the death of Wolfe Tone. After being sentenced to death by a military court, Tone attempted to commit suicide just hours before his execution. Despite slitting his throat from ear to ear, he missed his jugular vein and lived, though very seriously wounded. "I am but a poor anatomist", he is reputed to have said. Debate then ensued as to whether or not to continue with the execution of a seriously wounded prisoner. Orders and counter-orders were issued; writs of habeas corpus were called for and rejected. Kilwarden, on grounds of compassion, postponed the execution. Tone died a few days later of his own wounds<sup>1</sup>.

Kilwarden was killed in 1803, during the rebellion led by Robert Emmet. Newlands Golf Club House now stands on the site of this historic house.



*Newlands House*

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Boylan, Wolfe Tone, (Dublin, 1981), pp 132/133.

## LUCAN

On the evening of 23 May 1798, the Athlone bound mail coach was stopped and destroyed at Lucan. The stopping of the mail-coaches from Dublin at various points along the routes was the signal for the outbreak of the Rebellion. While this failed in many instances, the Lucan rebels were successful and a correspondent noted on 24 May "from this town all is confusion."<sup>1</sup>

On the early morning of 24 May a party of 11 Angus Highlanders, commanded by Lieutenant George Armstrong, and accompanied by Mr. Wynne of Clonsilla and his yeomanry corps were en route to Ratoath where a large force of rebels had gathered. On their way they encountered and dispersed a party of rebels near Esker and arrested two leaders "of the name of Geraghty"<sup>2</sup>. Another body of rebels, led by a Mr. Daly had also been dispersed near Lucan, although many of this group were either killed or taken prisoner.

The night of Friday 25 May saw more action in the Lucan area. At 9 o'clock in the evening, an iron works, owned by Mr. Blair, was attacked by approximately 100 rebels armed with guns, pikes and swords. George Cummins, a Catholic deserter from the Clonsilla Corp of yeomanry, was afterwards court-martialed and charged with leading this band. Evidence was given by John Lyons and James Carroll, both of whom were employed at Blairs. Carroll gave evidence of guns being stolen, while Lyons said that he and several others were taken prisoner and marched off towards Dunboyne. Cummins was court-martialed on 10 July 1798 and sentenced to death. He was afterwards pardoned.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Wilson to \_\_\_\_\_, 24 May 1798 (N.A.Rep. Pap. 620/37/142; Cal. Rep. Pap. Ire., Vol. 4 p. 632).

<sup>2</sup> Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland, Richard Musgrave (U.S., 1995). p. 203.

# DISARMING OF DUBLIN AND WICKLOW MOUNTAINS

By May 1798, Camden's policy of free quartering had pacified the southern and midland counties. The Castle now received reports that Wicklow and the surrounding mountain areas were "extensively and formidably" organised, with forces of around 12,000. Government forces were stationed at Bray and Wicklow, with Yeomanry despatched to cover the mountains and bogs of Dublin and Wicklow. The Rebellion leaders were joined by people from different backgrounds, but with similar aims. Shopkeepers from small towns and villages, hill-farmers and sheep-farmers joined in the hope of alleviating some of their longstanding grievances - high rents and low prices for their produce and a better place in society. But the Castle also received reports that the Catholic middle-classes, as well as the Catholic clergy were behind the movement.

General Lake was in charge of this campaign. An ultimatum was sent to towns and villages urging people to surrender. This was followed by acts of excessive force on the part of Major Hardy's troops. Many acts of brutality and torture took place, as well as the burnings of houses and property. Supplies of guns and ammunition were unearthed, the leaders organising committees were arrested and many of the local followers surrendered. The Rebellion was thus quickly put down. Captain Edwards, a local magistrate, clashed with Hardy on the methods adopted. He felt that excessive and unnecessary force would turn the local population against the government, as well as spreading the Rebellion to neighbouring areas. Edwards travelled into the mountains to accept the peaceful surrender of the rebels, who had hoped that by surrendering, they would be given the protection of the crown. This protection was not forthcoming, as Edwards was relieved of his command the next day<sup>1</sup>.





# WEAPONS, TORTURE AND PUNISHMENT IN THE REBELLION

The 1798 Rebellion was one of the bloodiest in Irish history. As well as the destruction and burning of houses and property, it witnessed many forms of punishment and torture. Some of these were already in use but the Rebellion gave birth to new forms of the age-old practice of combatants inflicting torture on each other as well as on the defenceless public.

## THE TRIANGLE

This was one of the most notorious instruments of punishment and execution used during the Rebellion and was developed in the Kildare area. It was a variation on the crucifixion, and consisted of a timber-framed inverted triangle, with the apex pointing downwards. Victims were tied to the triangle and lashed or whipped. An adaptation of the triangle, developed by a Major Swayne, was to place a sharp spike on the ground at the apex of the triangle, with the victim's bare feet placed on the spike. It provided a brutal but effective method of extracting information or else a slow and painful death as the victim's strength drained away, his body sagged and the spike pierced his feet. Swayne, a particularly detested character, was later shot and burned in a barrel of tar.

## PIKING

The pike was one of the most common weapons used by the insurgents during the Rebellion. Pikes were in plentiful supply - every village and town had at least one blacksmith - and they were easy to hide and carry. Victims of execution were sometimes shot and then piked. A particular form of the pike, with a downward pointing hook for catching horse's reins, evolved in the Wexford area and became a symbol of the Rebellion. Pikes were also used to stop advancing cavalry. This was done by embedding the shafts of the pikes in the ground and waiting for the cavalry to charge onto them.

## PITCH-CAPPING

This was the practice whereby a soldier's helmet was filled with pitch or tar, placed on an insurgent's head and then set alight. Like many forms of punishment, it was used to extract information or as a means of punishment for deeds already carried out. Pitch-capping was used extensively in the Prosperous/Rathangan area.

## HANGING FROM A CART

A standard farmyard cart was used as a type of makeshift gallows. The cart was put leaning against a wall or the gable-end of a house, and the victim hung up between the shafts. It was used predominantly in the south-east of the country.

## HALF-HANGING

This was an unique form of torture, devised by a Major Hepenstall. Hepenstall was a tall powerfully built man, who used his own bulk as a gallows. Victims were hauled up on Hemenstall's back and left suspended there until information was extracted from them.

Public executions and corpses being put on display were a common feature of the rebellion. Perhaps the most famous incident of the latter was when three corpses and later two more were put on public display in Castle Yard, Dublin Castle. Even seasoned soldiers and campaigners found the spectacle too much. One soldier called the scene "the most frightful spectacle which ever disgraced a royal residence" and those who worked in and visited the Castle had to endure the gruesome and shocking scene.

## TRANSPORTATION

Many of those involved in the rebellion were "transported" or sent as convicts to the penal colony of Botany Bay, Australia, then an undeveloped part of the British Empire. They were often referred to as "deportees", i.e., those who had been deported. Others were forced to take up service with the British army or navy.



*Soldiers flogging a prisoner, 1798.*

*Courtesy of Michael Kenny, National Museum of Ireland*



## CONCLUSION

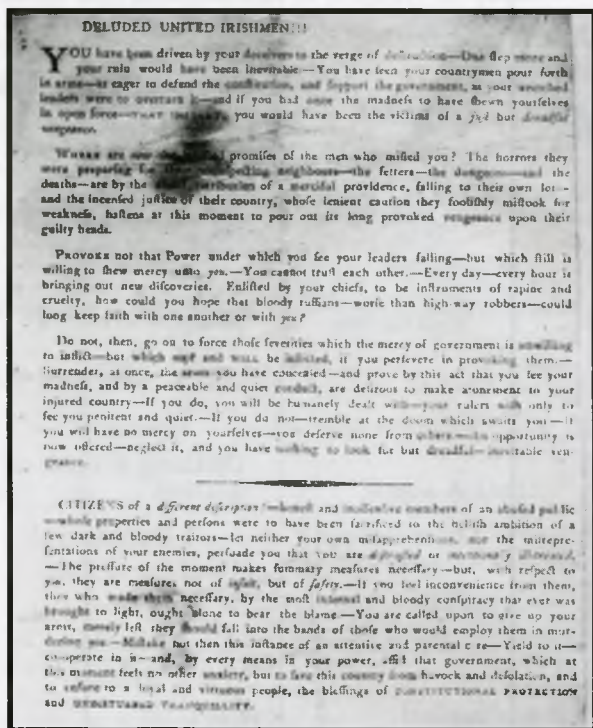
During that eventful summer of 1798 a considerable amount of damage was caused to property and a commission was established to examine the losses sustained by loyal subjects. The following chart gives some indication of claims arising from the rebel attacks in south Dublin.

A list of persons who suffered loss of property in 1798:

Claimants Name	Place where loss sustained	Damage	Amount		
			£	s	d
<b>Bagnall, Rose</b>	Ballinascorney	Cattle	18	4	0
<b>Boyle, Peter</b>	Mt. Pelier	Cattle & Provisions	22	6	9
<b>Donahue, Michael</b>	Ballinascorney	3 cows	17	1	3
<b>Goucher, William</b>	Brittas	House & Cattle	430	1	1/2
<b>Healy, Michael</b>	Tallaght Hill	Cattle	13	8	3
<b>Irwin, . Phipps Wm</b>	Mt. Pelier	Bullocks, Sheep, Lambs & Cattle	365	10	0
<b>Lennon, William</b>	Crumlin	Tea, Liquor, Clothing & Watch	31	12	2
<b>Minchin, Humphry</b>	Little Grange	Cart & Geers, a musket & food	27	10	6

<b>Claimants Name</b>	<b>Place where loss sustained</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Amount £ s d</b>
<b>Mullen, John</b>	Rathcoole	House & Offices	174 3 11
<b>O'Brien, Henry &amp; Thomas</b>	Brittas	House, Furniture, cows & calves	285 7 1
<b>O'Brien, J &amp; T</b>	Brittas	Rent	231 - -
<b>O'Brien, John</b>	Brittas	House, Furniture, oatmeal & potatoes	158 14 5
<b>Ord, Arthur</b>	Crumlin	House, Furniture, Horse & Cart	225 17 4
<b>Phillips, George</b>	Killinarden	House, Furniture & Cash	224 16 3
<b>Richmond, James</b>	Tallaght Hill	Horses, Clothing & Cash	42 0 6
<b>Sirr, Joseph</b>	Little Grange	1 Sword, Clothing & Port	16 3 9 1/2
<b>Smith, Thomas</b>	Crumlin	Cash, Clothing & Furniture	66 4 9
<b>Smith Henry</b>	Ballycreagh	House & offices, sheep, rack & manger	69 18 3
<b>Smyth, William</b>	Saggart	Horses	20 - -
<b>Toole, James</b>	Greenhills	Hay	40 - -

The total amount claimed for County Dublin was £24,210 0s 11d. This compares favourably with Kildare at £93,220 6s 3d and Wexford at £311,341 1s 7d<sup>2</sup> - a clear indication that damage caused in Dublin was minor in comparison with other parts of the country. None the less, the rebels of south Dublin remained active and despite the defeats at Wexford and the failure of the French forces in Mayo, there is evidence to suggest that they intended to attack Dublin as late as September 1798<sup>3</sup>.



*Government proclamation, 1798, demanding the surrender of the United Irishmen and the handing up of their arms.*

*Courtesy of Michael Kenny, National Museum of Ireland*

- 1 A list of persons who suffered loss of property 1798. (Nat. Lib., JLB94107)
- 2 *ibid*
- 3 Letter from Richard Frizell, 4 Sept. 1798 (N.A., Reb. Pap. 620/3/32/15; Cal. Reb. Pap. 1790-1804 Ire., Vol.1 p.8.

Within south Dublin there is no doubt that the rebellion began with a series of major skirmishes at Rathfarnham, Lucan and Clondalkin. In this respect south Dublin was no different from other areas of County Dublin. Maxwell, Musgrave<sup>1</sup> and other commentators provide evidence of this. However, a study of the newspapers of the time demonstrate that guerrilla warfare was carried out in south Dublin to a far greater extent than in other parts of the county. These newspaper reports of the rebellion in Dublin chronicle a series of incidents and occurrences, most of them emanating from the southern end of the county.

The mountains separating Dublin and Wicklow provided plenty of cover for the rebels. This area was relatively uncharted territory to the government forces and no doubt contributed greatly to the guerrilla warfare that continued in South Dublin throughout the summer of 1798. The construction of the Military Road from Rathfarnham, over these mountains, to Wicklow began shortly after the rebellion <sup>2</sup>.

In so far as may be discerned from fragmentary sources, the members of the rebel forces in South Dublin comprised many wealthy farmers and their sons. Artisan and servant classes were also very much in evidence and there are many indications of female as well as male involvement. The Catholic priests of the area were also active, in particular the priests at Rathfarnham, Rathcoole, Saggart and Newcastle.

The rebels remained active throughout the summer and as has been mentioned, continued planning attacks on the city right up to September 1798. The rebellion was, however, crushed and the Act of Union passed in 1800. The next major uprising in Irish History was carried out in 1803, the rebels in this case led by Robert Emmet. One wonders was it pure coincidence that Emmet should be residing in Rathfarnham at the time of his failed rebellion, or whether this might be a legacy of the rebellious activity in the area in 1798. There is certainly evidence that many of those involved in 1798 were again active in 1803.

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland. Richard Musgrave (U.S.1995); W. H. Maxwell, History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798 (London, 1903).

<sup>2</sup> William Nolan, 'Some civil and ecclesiastical territorial divisions and their geographic significance' in L.M. Cullen (ed.), Man, landscape and roads, the changing eighteenth century (Dublin, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> Cal.Reb Pap. Ire. 1790-1807, Vol, ip.77.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Outside Influences

<b>1775 - 1781</b>	American War of Independence
<b>1789 - 1799</b>	French Revolution

## Ireland - The Road to '98

<b>Oct. 1791</b>	Society of The United Irishmen founded in Belfast
<b>Nov. 1791</b>	A branch established in Dublin
<b>1793</b>	Catholic Enfranchisement Act passed in Ireland
<b>1794</b>	Tone exiled to America
<b>1795/96</b>	Tone travels to France
<b>1796</b>	Tone made Colonel in the French Army
<b>Dec. 1796</b>	General Lazare Hoche sets sail for Bantry Bay with 48 ships & 13,000 men  The "Surveillante" sinks with the loss of 1,500 French
<b>Jan. 1797</b>	Plan abandoned to land in Ireland
<b>Mar. 1798</b>	Arrest of United Irishmen leaders
<b>May 1798</b>	Insurrection at Wexford
<b>21 June 1798</b>	Battle at Vinegar Hill
<b>June 1798</b>	Ulster army of United Irishmen rebels defeated by the British Henry Joy McCracken executed
<b>Aug. 1798</b>	General Humbert lands at Killala Bay, Co. Mayo. Defeat of British Forces at the Races of Castlebar
<b>Sept. 1798</b>	Battle of Ballinamuck: Defeat of French and Irish Matthew Tone hanged.
<b>10 Oct. 1798</b>	General Hardy with Tone on board sails into Lough Swilly
<b>10 Nov. 1798</b>	Tone court-martialed and sentenced to hanging on 12 Nov. Tone cuts his own throat
<b>19 Nov. 1798</b>	Tone dies at the age of 35



**Ballyroan Library:** Tel: 4941900

**Castletymon Library:** Tel: 4524888

**Clondalkin Library:** Tel: 4593315

**County Library, Tallaght:** Tel: 4620073

**Library Headquarters:** Tel: 4597834

## **South Dublin Libraries**